



Volume 34
Issue 2 *Winter*

Article 7

12-15-2018

My Father's Wars

Sheila A. Murphy

Abstract

Longer now than sixty years ago, dying in a veterans' hospital, committed by my mother

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), [Photography Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Murphy, Sheila A. (2018) "My Father's Wars," *Westview*: Vol. 34 : Iss. 2 , Article 7.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol34/iss2/7>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.



My Father's Wars

*In memory of Thomas James Gallagher,
1st Lt. U. S. Army Air Service Aeronautics (1885-1954)*

by Sheila A. Murphy

Longer now than sixty years ago,
dying in a veterans' hospital,
committed by my mother, unable
to be her husband or a lawyer or
my father, you are forever committed to
my memory: walking stiff-legged down
Main Street, and once, mirrored in my eyes,
turning as you tried, too late, to hide
an amber bottle under cellar stairs.

Born when you were fifty-one and deaf,
I find your face in fading photos,
smiling, proud, a man I never knew:

Perched atop your horse, in broad-brimmed hat,
on border duty in New Mexico—
the year is 1916. You look so young.

Standing near the cockpit of a bi-plane,
goggles perched jauntily above your brow,
you're poised to fly at Kelly Field in Texas,
before the 1917 crash that closed
your ears and introduced your pain.

In 1942, after leading the Memorial Day parade
to Victory Field, flanked by flags and cannon
and four wizened Civil War veterans, you call to

*render our tribute to the sacrifices of armed forces
scattered on far flung fronts....*

fading words on yellowed paper, brittle in my hand.
Oh Pop, you're marching, marching, still.



*Thomas J. Gallagher, Sgt. Amb. Corps, 2nd
Mass. Regiment Volunteer Infantry, 1916,
Mexican Border Campaign*